

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRA use only

received MAY 28 1982

date entered

JUN 28 1982

1. Name

historic N/A

and/or common Main Street Historic District

2. Location

street & number 21-65 Church Street; 667-1009 Main Street;
24-28 North Street; 20-22 Walnut Street N/A not for publication

city, town Willimantic N/A vicinity of congressional district 2nd

state Connecticut code 09 county Windham code 015

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple (See continuation sheet)

street & number " " "

city, town " N/A vicinity of state "

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Windham Town Hall

street & number 979 Main Street

city, town Willimantic state CT

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places Willimantic Footbridge-National Register of Historic Places
has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1982 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

city, town Hartford state CT

NR Eligible: Old Post Office, Windham Town Hall

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Main Street National Register District is comprised of the properties lining both sides of Main Street in the Central Business District of Willimantic. The district is bounded to the west by Bridge Street, and to the south by the railroad tracks of the Penn Central line. To the east, the district is bounded by Church Street south of Main Street and by the First Baptist Church north of Main Street. The northern boundary follows the rear property lines on the north side of Main Street, except where it extends north on Church and North and Walnut Streets to include several period buildings. The boundary excludes several privately-owned parking lots behind Main Street between North and Bank Streets. The boundaries have been drawn to focus on the 19th century commercial development of Main Street as the major business and trading center for the city.

The district is approximately 21 acres in size and contains 62 buildings. Also included is the Willimantic Footbridge (NR, 4-19-79) at the southeast corner of the district.

Approaching the district from the west, there is a gentle rise of 7' from Bridge Street to High Street. Grade is level along Main Street to Bank Street. It then drops off 20' down a fairly steep hill between Bank and Church Streets, where it again levels off. The southern boundary at the railroad tracks is 20' - 25' lower in grade than Main Street. The buildings on the south side of Main Street are built into the steep hill, with basements and sub-basements accessible at grade from the rear. There are several old stone retaining walls, and the area has become overgrown with trees. An unpaved alley runs along the railroad track for the full length of the district.

The street pattern in the district is part of a larger pattern which extends to the north. Main Street was once part of the old Windham Turnpike and was a major east-west route between Windham and the Willimantic mill area east of the district. Cross streets run perpendicular to Main Street in a regular grid pattern and were originally developed for residential or lower-grade commercial uses.

The district is comprised primarily of late 19th century, three and four-story commercial blocks. Many of the buildings are substantial brick blocks with Italianate or Queen Anne details. Others are of wood-frame construction, and several feature pressed tin facade decoration. There is a mixture of free-standing structures and groups of buildings with shared party-walls. Interspersed with these commercial blocks are several mid-19th century residential properties, converted to commercial storefronts at ground level. Over the years, a number of remodellings have occurred and several new infill buildings have been built which are incompatible with the district in their scale, design or use of modern materials. Public improvements in the district include new brick sidewalks and trees. These investments, combined with the City's facade grant program, are having a major impact on returning many of the later inappropriate storefronts to their original Victorian character.

Two major public buildings are located near the western edge of the district. The Windham Town Hall (Fig. 12) was designed by Bridgeport architect Warren Briggs and was completed in 1896. This prominent brick structure has a cross-axial plan and features both Georgian Revival and Romanesque design influences. The central three-bay pavilion of the nine-bay facade is crowned by a pediment and contains a recessed entrance en-framed by Classical columns and approached from a grand staircase with stone balustrades.

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Continuation sheet

Item number 4

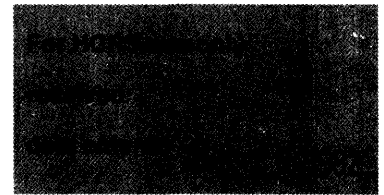
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List of Property Owners

Street and No.	Owner's Name and Address	Contribution to Historical/ Architectural Themes	Map Identification No.
Church Street 21-25	Mr. Paul Heller 14 Oakwood Drive Windham Center, CT 06280	C	1
31-45	Mr. Waldon Melo 202 Lake Road Columbia, CT and Mr. Omar H. Shepard Jr. Route 87 Columbia, CT 06237	C	2
off street between 45,55	Mr. Robert E. Casey 323A Oakridge Apts. Willimantic, CT 06226	C	3
55-65	Mr. Waldon Melo 202 Lake Road Columbia, CT 06237	C	4
Main Street 667	Mr. Harold Nichols Chairman, Board of Trustees of First Baptist Church Sanitarium Road South Windham, Ct 06266	C	5
679	Willimantic Savings and Loan Co. 679 Main Street Willimantic, CT 06226	N	6
699	Mr. Arthur Loiselle 175 Walnut Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	7
	Mr. George Fraser, Jr. 88 Roanoak Avenue Willimantic, CT 06226		
	Mr. Earl McSweeney 160 Windham Street Willimantic, CT 06226		

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Street and No.	Owner's Name and Address	Contribution to Historical/ Architectural Themes	Map Identification No.
711-15	Margaret Bruce 13 Atlantic Avenue Groton Long Point, CT 06340	C	8
721	Margaret Bruce 13 Atlantic Avenue Groton Long Point, CT 06340	N	9
725	Mrs. Dorothy Brown 115 Bolivia Street Willimantic, CT	C	10
33	Mr. Adam Todd Ravine Road Mansfield, CT 06268	N	11
Footbridge at Railroad St.	City of Willimantic Windham Town Hall 979 Main Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	12
738	Dr. Edwin Brainerd 738 Main Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	13
745	Mr. Richard Nassiff 325 Prospect Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	14
746	Mr. Raymond Medeiros Church Road Lebanon, CT 06249	C	15
750	Mr. Joseph Tubridy 298 Walnut Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	16
756	Mr. I. Mayo Cohen 303 North Street Willimantic, CT 06226	N	17
757	Mr. Jackson Sumner Windham Center, CT 06280	N	18

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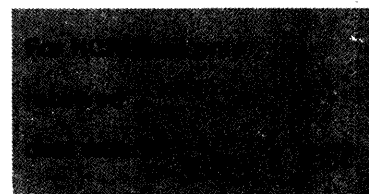
Item number 4

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Street and No.	Owner's Name and Address	Contribution to Historical/ Architectural Themes	Map Identification No.
760-68	Mr. Michael Zeising 264 Prospect Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	19
	Mr. Mark Zeising 71 Chestnut Street Willimantic, CT 06226		
776	Mr. Milton Johnson 99 Lewiston Avenue Willimantic, CT 06226	C	20
779	Connecticut Bank and Trust Co. Mr. Charles Poulin, Manager 318 Redwood Drive Manchester, CT 06040	N	21
786	Ms. Nancy Prague 104 Norwich Avenue Norwich, CT 06360	C	22
789	Mr. Sam Gordon 18 Willington Hill Road Mansfield, CT 06268	C	23
790	Mr. Henry Kucharski 384 Prospect Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	24
796	Mr. Henry Kucharski 384 Prospect Street Willimantic CT 06226	C	25
803	Mr. William Wilcox, President Willimantic Savings Institute 803 Main Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	26
804	Mr. Walter Najduck Card Street Lebanon, CT 06249	C	27
819	Albert and Rose Riquier Lakeview Park Columbia, CT 06237	C	28

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Street and No.	Owner's Name and Address	Contribution to Historical/ Architectural Themes	Map Identification No.
822	Estate of Abraham Beller C/O Mr. Sidney Beller 35 Shoales Avenue Norwich, CT 06360	N	29
827-37	Business Manager Eastern Connecticut State College 83 Windham Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	30
832-40	YMCA of Willimantic 832-40 Main Street Willimantic, CT 06226	N	31
850-58	Salahuttin and Neriman Kardestuncer 146 Huntinglodge Road Storrs, CT 06268	N	32
851-3	Mary M. Fittabile 853 Main Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	33
859	Mr. George Haddad 133 Prospect Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	34
860	Michael and Brenda Beattie 3 Eagle Court Storrs, CT 06268	C	35
866	Samick Enterprises C/O Mr. Samuel Gordon 18 Willington Hill Road Storrs, CT 06268	C	36
871	Willimantic Community Redevelopment Agency 54 North Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	37
872	Mr. Robert Haggerty Indian Hollow Road, RFD #2 Windham Center, CT 06280	C	38
873	Mrs. Rose Haddad 336 Valley Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	39

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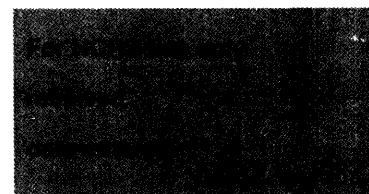
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Street and No.	Owner's Name And Address	Contribution to Historical/ Architectural Themes	Map Identification No.
877	Mrs. Rose Haddad 336 Valley Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	40
884-88	Dr. Vernon Mason 74 Pigeon Road Willimantic, CT 06226	N	41
893	Mr. Leo Santucci 74 Windham Street Willimantic, CT 06226	N	42
896-914	Buss and Ingram P.O. Box 379 Willimantic, CT 06226	C	43
901-7	City of Willimantic C/O Mayor John Lescoe Windham Town Hall 979 Main Street Willimantic, CT 06226	N	44
920	Mr. Robert P. Willis Chaplin, CT 06235	N	45
927	U.S. Postal Contractor's Inc. 19 Colonial Drive 1057 Trumbull Avenue Girard, Ohio 44420	N	46
931	Solomon and Elinor Tilles 419 Choffeeville Road Mainsfield, CT 06250	C	47
944	Mrs. Angeline Todaro C/O Mrs. A Shifrin 944 Main Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	48
944 rear	Mr. Joel Anthony Cards Mill Road Columbia, CT 06237	C	49
948	Mrs. Evelyn P. Lonegan 128 Windham Street Willimantic, CT 06226	N	50

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Street and No.	Owner's Name and Address	Contribution to Historical/ Architectural Themes	Map Identification No.
956-60	Mr. Andrew Mangano 105 South Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	51
967	U.S. Postal Service 967 Main Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	52
972	Mrs. Arline Seaforth Mullen Hill Road Windham Center, CT 06280	N	53
980	Southern New England Telephone Co. Cemetery Road Willimantic, CT 06226	N	54
at Bridge Street	Doris K. and Dorothy E. Brown 115 Bolivia Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	55
979	Mayor John Lescoe City of Willimantic 979 Main Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	56
1003	Hall and Bill Printing Co. 1003 Main Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	57
1009	Joseph and Lucy Handfield 127 Spring Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	58
North Street 24	Mr. George Haddad 133 Prospect Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	59
28	Mr. George Haddad 133 Prospect Street Willimantic, CT 06226	C	60
Walnut Street 20-22	Mr. Kenneth Shane Oak Hill Drive Willimantic, CT 06226	C	61

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Street and No.	Owner's Name and Address	Contribution to Historical/ Architectural Themes	Map Identification No.
32	Captain June Pasquali Salvation Army of America P.O. Box 595 Willimantic, CT 06226	C	62
<u>Vacant Lots</u>			
947 Main Street	Willimantic Savings and Loan Co. 679 Main Street Willimantic, CT 06226	N	63
Main Street at Railroad Street	Willimantic Community Redevelopment Agency 54 North Street Willimantic, CT 06226	N	64,65

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The building sits on a raised foundation of ashlar brownstone. Its focal point is the high copper clock tower with cupola which rises from the center of the hipped roof structure. A one-story brick wing was added in 1955 at basement level along the west elevation.

Directly east of the Town Hall is the Old Post Office (Fig. 11), completed in 1911. The Neo-Classical Revival structure is faced in limestone and has a central pedimented pavilion enframing the main entrance. The tall narrow windows with transoms are set in recessed panels with projecting keystones. The building is capped by a modillioned cornice and a panelled limestone parapet.

Several of the district's oldest structures were built c. 1825 by the Windham Manufacturing Company, later to become the Windham and Smithville Manufacturing Company. Located at the southwest edge of the district, the company store (Fig. 14) and rowhouse (Fig. 15) are built of coursed ashlar granite, with alternating wide and narrow courses of light and dark stone. The storehouse has a gable roof and is four bays deep and three bays wide. The center bay openings of the south elevation are large loading windows which face directly onto the Penn Central tracks. The rowhouse continues to be used in a residential function. It is two stories high with a partially raised basement and entrances in the center bay and the third bay from each end. Windows are now mostly six-over-one double-hung sash. The building has a gently pitched ridge roof with decorative wood brackets beneath the eaves of the end elevations.

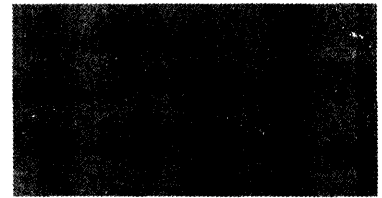
The building at #24 Church Street and the Haran Block are typical of the brick commercial blocks in the district. The former (Fig. 13) is three stories and six bays wide with a high parapet comprised of two corbelled bands. The segmental-arched windows of the upper stories are decorated with granite imposts, keystones and sills. Terra cotta tiles are laid in courses at the impost level and between the second and third stories. Original cast-iron columns are integrated into the period storefront designs. In the Haran Block of 1890, (Fig. 10) the five-bay facade has a corbelled parapet with large corbels between each bay alternating with smaller corbel bands. Granite is used for the keystones, imposts and tabbed sills on the upper stories and as a lintel above the storefronts. A variety of terra cotta tiles are inlaid to form patterned courses on the facade, at floor, sill, sash and impost levels and between the large corbels of the cornice. The original storefronts are largely intact, concealed behind later wood and metal coverings.

Another prominent structure is Hayden's Marble Front Block of 1879 (Fig. 9). The five-bay, two-story facade is actually faced in limestone but was designed to give the appearance of marble. This building reflects Renaissance Revival influences in its balustraded cornice and large segmental-arched windows, each a full bay wide, at the second story. Except for storefront alterations, the building retains its prominence among the Main Street commercial structures.

Directly west of Hayden's Block is the Willimantic Savings Institute (Fig. 9). The original 1870 Victorian Gothic facade was replaced in the 1920's by the present Modernistic design. Faced in limestone, the six bays of the facade are separated by fluted pilasters capped with abstract decoration, all of which maintain the single plane of the facade.

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Further east on Main Street is the recently renovated Nassiff's Block (Fig. 8), formerly the F.W. Woolworth Block. This building has a fine Art Deco facade, three bays wide with a strong horizontal emphasis. The second story windows are capped by fluted spandrels which break the cornice in a parapet effect. Narrow bands of abstract pattern form courses above and below the second story.

The Murray Building of 1894 (Fig. 6) occupies a highly visible site at the corner of Main and Church Streets. The corner entrance bay capped by a gable strongly marks the eastern edge of this commercial block. The three-story structure is five bays wide and eight bays deep. The Main Street facade features large rectangular windows with multi-light transoms at the second story and paired one-over-one windows in each bay of the third story. Recessed panels and masonry piers between alternating bays add to the decorative relief of the design.

A highlight of the south side of Main Street is the restored facade of the Sadd Block (Fig. 1). This tall narrow building features a fanciful pressed tin facade of panelled piers, arched fans above the windows, floral patterned spandrels and a frieze of connecting festoons. The multi-tonal treatment accentuates the ornateness of the facade design. The two-story portion of the Sadd Block facade (Fig. 3) is faced in clapboards with two paired one-over-one windows at the second story. A simple bracketed cornice and panelled pilasters frame the facade.

The three-story Chapman Block (Fig. 4) is ten bays wide and is crowned by a fine corbelled cornice. The segmental-arched windows of the second story and the round-headed third story windows are each enframed by corbelled hoods. The simple lines and consistent pattern of the bays create a strong rhythmic element in the streetscape.

The eastern edge of the district is marked by the spire of the First Baptist Church (Fig. 5). Of Italianate design, this wood-frame structure is capped by an octagonal tower with round-arched vents in the four principal faces. The three-bays of the facade are framed by ornate Italianate pilasters. Within each bay is a recessed two-story round-arched inset, within which pairs of tall round-arched windows are placed above paired rectangular windows. The center entrance is surmounted by a richly modelled pediment supported on carved brackets. The side and rear elevations have been covered in aluminum siding, with minimal impact on the original design.

Later development is concentrated in the western portion of the district. These intrusions include the library (Fig. 17) and post office, Anchor Pharmacy, Beller Block, YMCA (Fig. 16), Lonagan Block, 893, 920 and 980 Main Street (Fig. 18) and the Connecticut Bank and Trust Company. The majority of structures, however, retain their original appearance with only minor alterations. Collectively, they contribute to the cohesive character and architectural integrity of this late nineteenth century business and trading center.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates N/A Builder/Architect multiple (See Item 7)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Main Street National Register District possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The district is associated with commercial developments which made a direct contribution to the nineteenth century development of the nation; it is associated with the lives of persons significant in the development of the city; and it embodies distinctive characteristics of the type, period and methods of construction typical of nineteenth century industrial communities of Windham County and the east-central Connecticut region.

The Main Street National Register District gains its historical significance from its role as a major railroading and trade center for the surrounding region during the mid-to late nineteenth century. The village of Willimantic Falls, however, dates back to 1706, the year that the first sawmill and gristmill were built at the junction of the Natchaug and Willimantic Rivers. The name "Willimantic" is an Indian word meaning "Land of the Swift Running Waters," appropriately selected to denote the 90-foot drop in the river between the town's western edge and its junction with the Natchaug. In 1822, water rights were purchased by pioneer cotton spinner Percy O. Richmond, a factor which was crucial to the development of Willimantic Falls as a manufacturing village. Within the next five years, Richmond's initiative was followed by others and there were soon four cotton mills operating in the village. These included the mill of the Jillson brothers, William, Asa and Seth, and the Windham Cotton Manufacturing Company established by Matthew Watson and Aranah Tingley of Providence. By 1836, there were six mills. The largest was the Windham Company mill, situated along the river near Bridge Street, while the others were further east.

Main Street at this time served as the main route between the two manufacturing villages and was edged by a scattering of small houses. Main Street had been laid out as early as 1707 and in 1799 was included as part of the Windham Turnpike. In 1826, local residents petitioned for better roads and bridges. Main Street was widened soon thereafter, and houses and shops began to dot its edges.

The arrival of the railroad in 1849 played a vital role in the commercial development of Main Street. First came the New London, Willimantic and Palmer line (later the New London Northern), then in 1853 the Hartford, Providence and Fishkill route. In 1872 the Boston, Hartford and Erie Railroad completed a line between Putnam and Willimantic, and the New Haven, Middletown and Willimantic (Air Line) also began operation. These four railroad lines, conveniently located directly south of Main Street and near the cotton mills, transformed Willimantic into one of the most important and convenient railroad centers in the country. The railroads quickly replaced the stagecoach trade, and dramatically increased the flow of goods and passengers in and out of the village.

Coinciding with this development was the founding in 1854 of the Willimantic Linen Company by Austin Dunham and a group of Hartford capitalists to manufacture linen, napkins and shoe threads. A shortage of flax due to the Crimean War of 1854 forced the company to develop new technologies for the making of fine threads. In 1876, the highest award of the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition was awarded to the Willimantic

9. Major Bibliographical References

Crofit, Florence S.M., Guide to the History and Historic Sites of Connecticut, Vol.2, New Haven: Yale Press (1937).

Larned, Ellen P., History of Windham County, Connecticut, Vol.2, Chester, CT: Pequot Press (1976).

Willimantic Chronicle Newspapers, Photograph Collection

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approx. 21 acres

Quadrangle name Willimantic, CT

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	8
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7	3	1	3	6	0
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4	6	2	1	4	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

1	8
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7	3	1	3	2	0
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4	6	2	1	3	7	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

1	8
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7	3	1	9	3	0
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4	6	2	1	2	4	0
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D

1	8
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7	3	2	0	2	0
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4	6	2	1	2	8	0
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E

1	8
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7	3	2	0	3	0
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4	6	2	1	3	6	0
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F

1	8
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7	3	2	0	0	0
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4	6	2	1	4	0	0
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G

1	8
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7	3	1	9	5	0
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H

1	8
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7	3	1	9	0	0
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4	6	2	1	3	8	0
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Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Margo B. Webber, Preservation Planner

organization Anderson Notter Finegold Inc.

date August, 1980

street & number 77 North Washington Street

telephone (617) 227-9272

city or town Boston,

state Massachusetts 02114

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☒ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

date May 21, 1982

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register date 6/28/82

for Shelley Byers
Keeper of the National Register

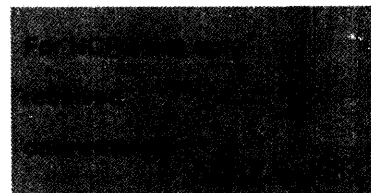
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Linen Company. Production volumes increased dramatically over the next two decades. The company merged with the American Thread Company in 1898 and was renamed the Willimantic Thread Company. It continued to serve as the largest local industry and employer for many years.

The combined effect of the railroads and the Willimantic Linen Company was to create a bustling trade and business district along Main Street from Bridge Street east to Union Street. Many of the earlier wood-frame residences and shops were replaced by substantial commercial blocks after 1870. These blocks were constructed to take advantage of the proximity to the local mills and the railyards. By 1900, Main Street contained an impressive array of commercial structures.

These buildings embody distinctive characteristics of nineteenth century stylistic trends, and reflect the transition from residential to commercial uses. Today, the streetscape retains much of its late nineteenth century character. Also still intact are several Greek Revival residences from Main Street's early development, later converted to commercial uses in recognition of the area's changing role. The majority of buildings, however, are three and four-story structures, of brick or wood, with detailing of the Italianate and Victorian era styles. They form a cohesive grouping of buildings, consistent in massing, scale, materials and stylistic details. Major buildings were constructed by prominent local businessmen who were important figures in the growth and development of the community.

The Windham Savings Institute, completed in 1870, was the first of the major business blocks to be constructed on Main Street. The Victorian Gothic design featured lancet-arched storefronts and polychrome stone trim. It was remodelled in the 1920's to its present Moderne design. The Bank was founded in 1842 with Oliver Kingsley as its first president. Also housed in the building since 1879 was the Windham National Bank, the oldest bank in the county, having been organized in 1832. This building was also the first home of the Willimantic Normal School in the 1890's and later housed the library, Order of Elks and the Willimantic Women's Club in its upper floors.

On the site of the present Connecticut Bank and Trust Company stood the United Bank Building, a handsome Queen Anne structure built in 1885 to house the First National and Dime Savings Banks. The latter was organized in 1872 with Silas F. Loomer and O.H.K. Risley its first officers. The First National Bank, incorporated in 1878, was the youngest of Willimantic's financial institutions. W.C. Jillson served as its first president, succeeded by Ansel Arnold. A.T. Fowler and O.H.K. Risley served as vice president and cashier.

Among the most prominent of the commercial blocks was Hayden's Marble Front Block. It was built by Whiting Hayden in 1879. Hayden had previously served as a manager for the Windham and Smithville Company for many years. The Hayden Block housed the town offices and courtroom on its upper floor until 1896. The Murray Building was completed in 1894 by Hugh C. Murray to house the Boston Store. This was the first large-scale department store in Willimantic and in a sense marked its coming of age as a retail center. The Boston Store was founded by Murray, who had first gained success as a dry goods proprietor in a small shop in the Card Building on Main Street. The

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Chapman Block was constructed in 1876 by Ansel Arnold, a local pioneer in the wholesale grain business. Arnold, a founder and president of the First National Bank, was joined by Horace M. Chapman as a partner in the business from 1877-93. For many years the Chapman Block also housed the music store of A.C. Andrews. Other major commercial blocks included the Chronicle Building on Church Street and the Haran Block, put up in 1890 by Thomas Haran. The Fuller Block housed the community's oldest drug store, for many years owned by F.M. Wilson.

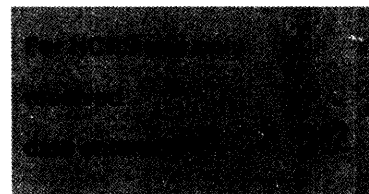
As Willimantic became a busy trade center, demands were created for hotel and cultural facilities. In 1886 S.G. Hooker opened the Hooker Hotel. It provided 100 fashionable hotel rooms and was a well-known stopping point for travellers. At the northeast corner of Church Street stood the Turner Block which housed the Windham Hotel, managed by proprietor Samuel H. Clark. It provided fifty rooms, some with private baths, a dining room and a large sample room for commercial travelers. A community fund-raising effort in the 1920's resulted in the construction of the Nathan Hale Hotel to meet a still-growing demand for hotel rooms. The hotel was then leased to a local proprietor although the City maintained ownership.

Franklin Hall was Willimantic's first public meeting hall. The present structure, built to replace the 1868 structure which burned, housed a public hall on its upper floor where theatrical performances, dances, school graduation and other public functions were held. The Loomer Opera House, a grand Second Empire structure designed by F.H. Kimball of New York, was built for Silas F. Loomer to serve as Willimantic's new theatrical and entertainment center. It stood at the northwest corner of Main and North Streets, on the site where Nassiff's was later built. The building contained shops, offices and society halls but its highlight was the 1,100-seat opera hall, with a 40-foot deep stage, a 35-foot proscenium opening, modern lighting, ventilation and acoustics. It was considered locally to be among the finest of New England theaters. In the 1920's, several movie theaters were built in the district. These included the Gem Theater, on the site of YMCA, and the Capitol Theater. The Capitol was the largest and most popular theater in downtown Willimantic. Another local landmark was the European Block at the corner of Main and Railroad Streets. This 2-1/2 story Italianate structure featured a gable fronting Main Street, round-headed shuttered windows and quoined corners. It housed the drugstore of John T. Baker. The Maverick Steam Laundry at 828 Main Street was for many years the only modern laundry in Windham County.

Growth of the commercial district prompted numerous public improvements as the borough grew into a full-fledged city. The first water pipe was laid in 1853, and by 1873 several of the mill owners agreed to pump water from the river up to Main Street and adjoining residential areas in return for an abatement of their taxes. In 1887, electricity was provided for lights and power. In the same years, a Board of Trade was formed to promote trade, aid in the development of mercantile and manufacturing interests and improve transportation facilities. Fifty members paid \$3 annual dues. In 1900 the Board of Trade sought the erection of a footbridge across the Willimantic River, an objective successfully accomplished by the City in 1906. The width of the footbridge was specifically designed to be wide enough to carry the hand-drawn fire pumps of the volunteer fire department. In 1902, under the director of Mayor W.D. Grant, the Willimantic Traction Company built the first trolley lines which ran from the railroad crossing just southeast of the district to Baltic, Norwich and New London. In 1904,

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tracks were laid on Main Street for the trolley line connecting to Coventry. During this period, sidewalks of brick or wood were first laid, and in 1913, Main Street was first paved in macadam.

Municipal facilities also relocated from Windham Center to Willimantic during the nineteenth century, in recognition of the district's growing importance as the center for business and governmental affairs. The Old Town Hall was located on Church Street in the building which later housed the Amvets. The first jail was located in the rear of the Holmes Block in a one-story brick wing which still retains the tiny arched cell windows along its north elevation. In 1896, the Town occupied its new building, re-locating its offices from the upper story of the Hayden Block. The new Windham Town Hall was completed three years after Willimantic received its city charter in 1893. Its bold architectural statement reflects the proud and self-confident image of the community. The local post office had many homes, beginning in 1825 when it was located in the Hebard Tavern. It later was housed in the Revere House Hotel on North Street and in the Jordan Building (676 Main Street) before moving to its own building, the Old Post Office, in 1911. This building was constructed under James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department, and is a handsome example of Neo-Classical Revival architecture.

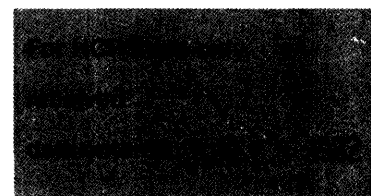
At the eastern edge of the district stands the First Baptist Church. This fine Italianate landmark was built to house one of the community's growing religious groups. The Baptist Church was established in 1827 with twenty members. Reverend Chester Tilden served as its first pastor until 1830. The first church was located on this site until 1858, when it was removed for replacement by the present structure. During its prime years, the district contained two other churches, the First Methodist Church, built in 1829 on the site of the later Atwood Block, and the First Congregational Church of 1827, remodelled in 1893 as the Melony Block across from the Hooker Hotel, where the Beller Block now stands.

The district also contains two of the last remaining structures of the Windham Cotton Manufacturing Company. The small Greek Revival structures are built of coursed ashlar granite and originally served as the company's store and boarding house. Today they serve as reminders of the days in the 1830's when the Windham Cotton Manufacturing Company, which stood just south and west of the district, was Willimantic's largest cotton mill. This company was later acquired by the Smithville Manufacturing Company.

The architectural quality of the district as a whole and of many of its individual components reflects the importance of Main Street as a business and trading center in the historical development of Willimantic. The district retains its historical integrity and is largely intact. The combination of early residential and commercial blocks forms a strong and relatively cohesive streetscape. Its distinctive sense of time and place is a reflection of its nineteenth century history and development.

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Beginning at a point at the centerline of Bridge Street at the southwest corner of the district, the southern boundary follows the northern edge of the property of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company to the centerline of Church Street; then north on Church Street to the centerline of Main Street; then east on Main Street to the eastern boundary of the First Baptist Church property; then following this property line north approximately 379 feet to the rear boundary of parcel 89/3A; then west along the northern boundary of parcel 89/3A to the rear property line of #31 Church Street; then north continuing along the rear property line of parcel 12 (Willimantic Coal and Lumber Co.) to the northern boundary line of #55 Church Street; then west to the center of Church Street and south to the rear property line of #699 Main Street. The northern boundary proceeds west along the rear property lines of the properties facing on Main Street to the centerline of North Street; then proceeding north to the northern boundary of #28 North Street; west along said line to the rear property line of said property; then south along west boundary to the rear property line of #745 Main Street; then west along the rear building walls of the north side of Main Street to the centerline of Bank Street; then north on Bank Street to the rear property line of #819 Main Street; then west along rear property lines of parcels on the north side of Main Street to the centerline of Walnut Street; then north to the northern property line of #32 Walnut Street; then west along said line to rear property line of said property and south to rear property line of #927 Main Street; then west along said line and continuing along rear property lines of parcels on the north side of Main Street to centerline of High Street; then north to rear property line of #979 Main Street; then west along said line to rear property lines of #1103 and #1109 Main Street; then south along western boundary of #1009 Main Street to centerline of Bridge Street; then proceeding south on Bridge Street to the northern boundary of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company property.

Item #9 (cont.)

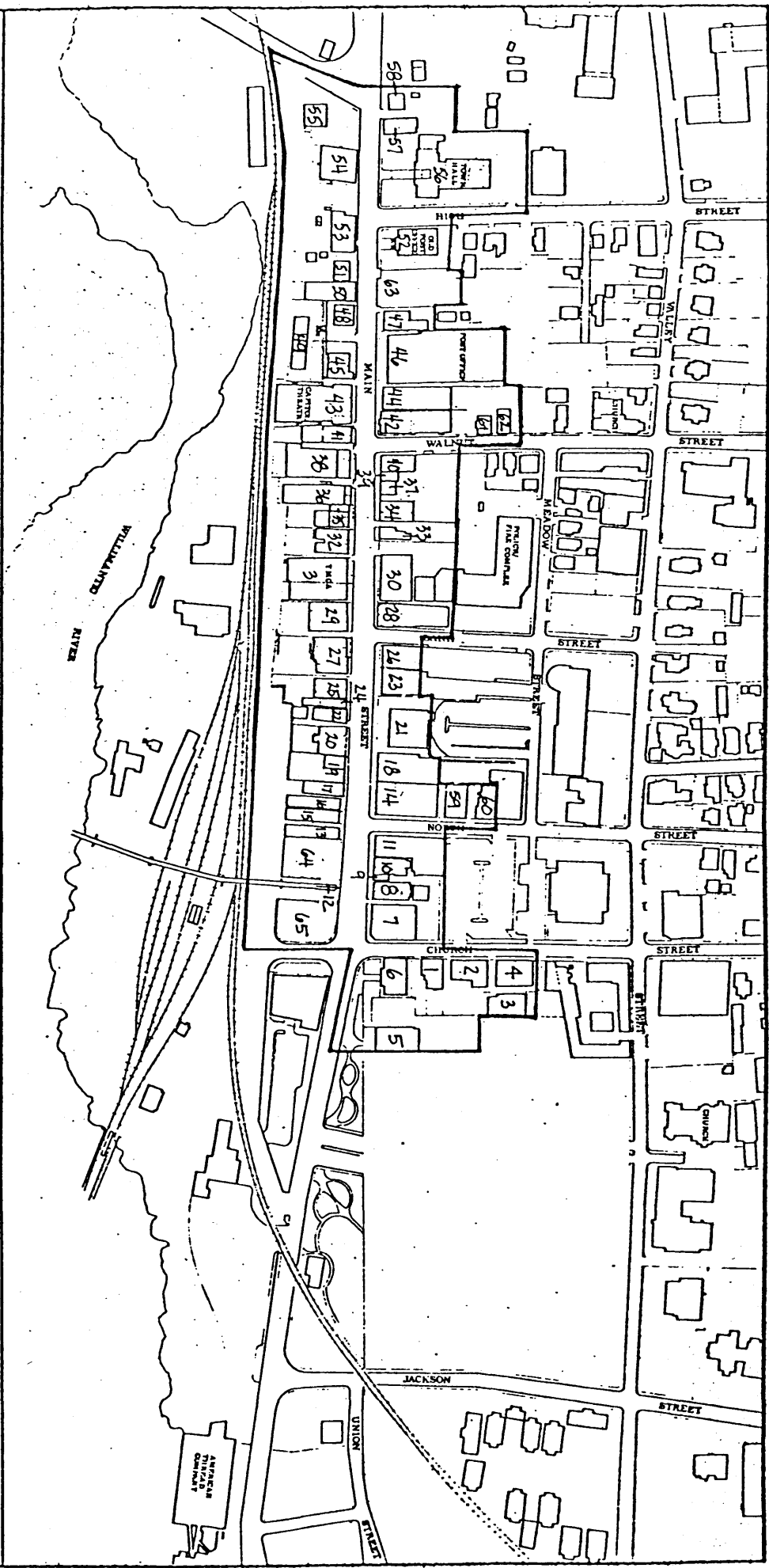
Willimantic Chronicle, Bicentennial Edition, September 8, 1967.

Willimantic Journal, Souvenir Edition, H.P. Donlan, ed., 1896.

Personal interviews with:

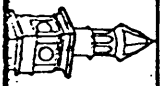
Society.

Reference. Mrs. Lucy Crosby Publisher, Willimantic Chronicle, Board of Directors Windham Historical
Miss Florence Grant, Lifetime resident of Willimantic.
Mrs. Edmund J. Hurley, Lifelong Willimantic resident of 96 years.



WILLIMANTIC DOWNTOWN STUDY

WILLIMANTIC REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY FEBRUARY 1980



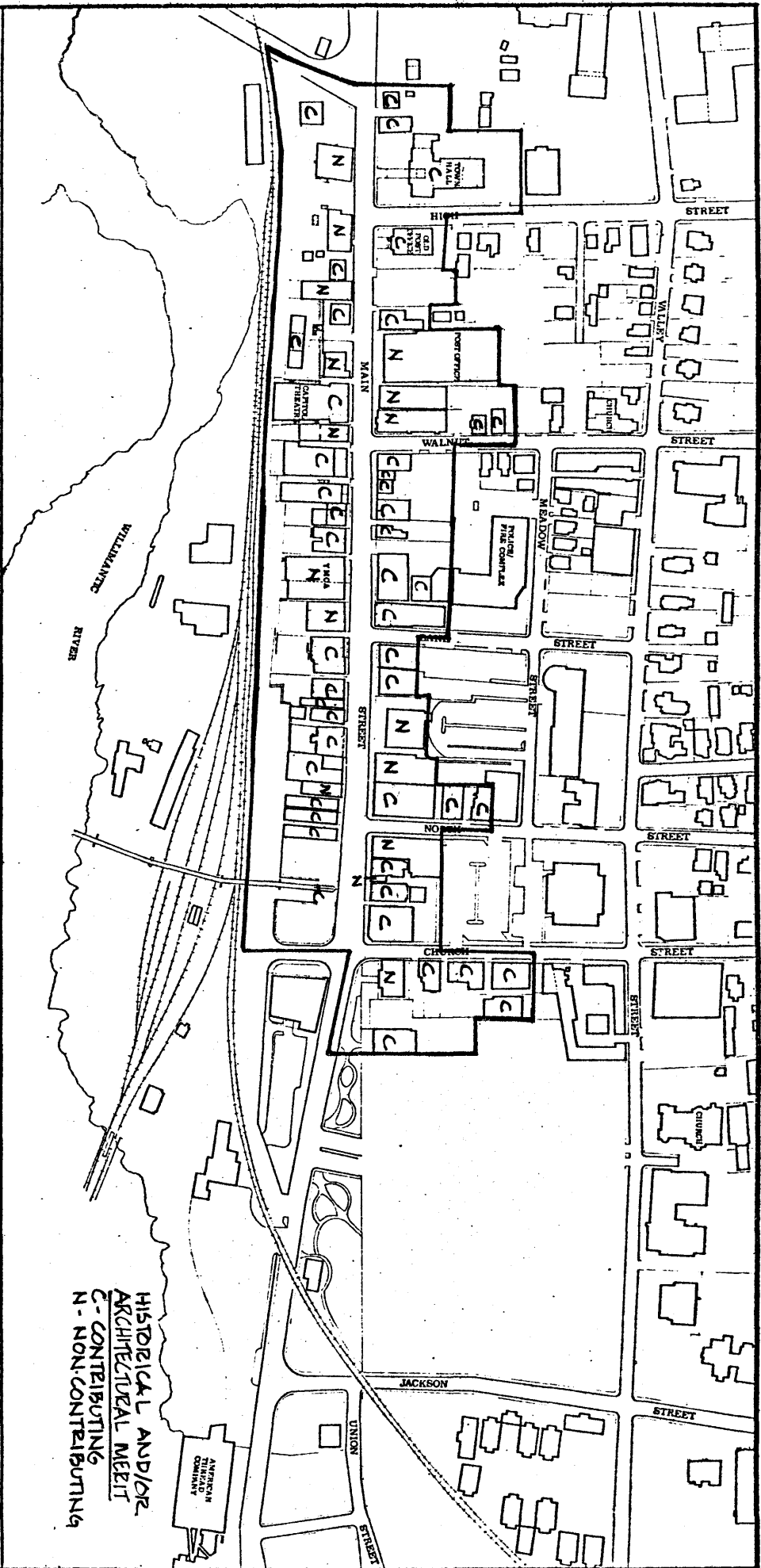
MAIN STREET NATIONAL REGISTER - DISTRICT
INDEX TO LIST OF PROPERTY OWNERS

ANDERSON NOTTER FINEGOLD INC.
Architects and Preservation Planners

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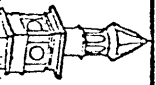
MAIN STREET NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT
BUILDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO DISTRICT'S SIGNIFICANCE
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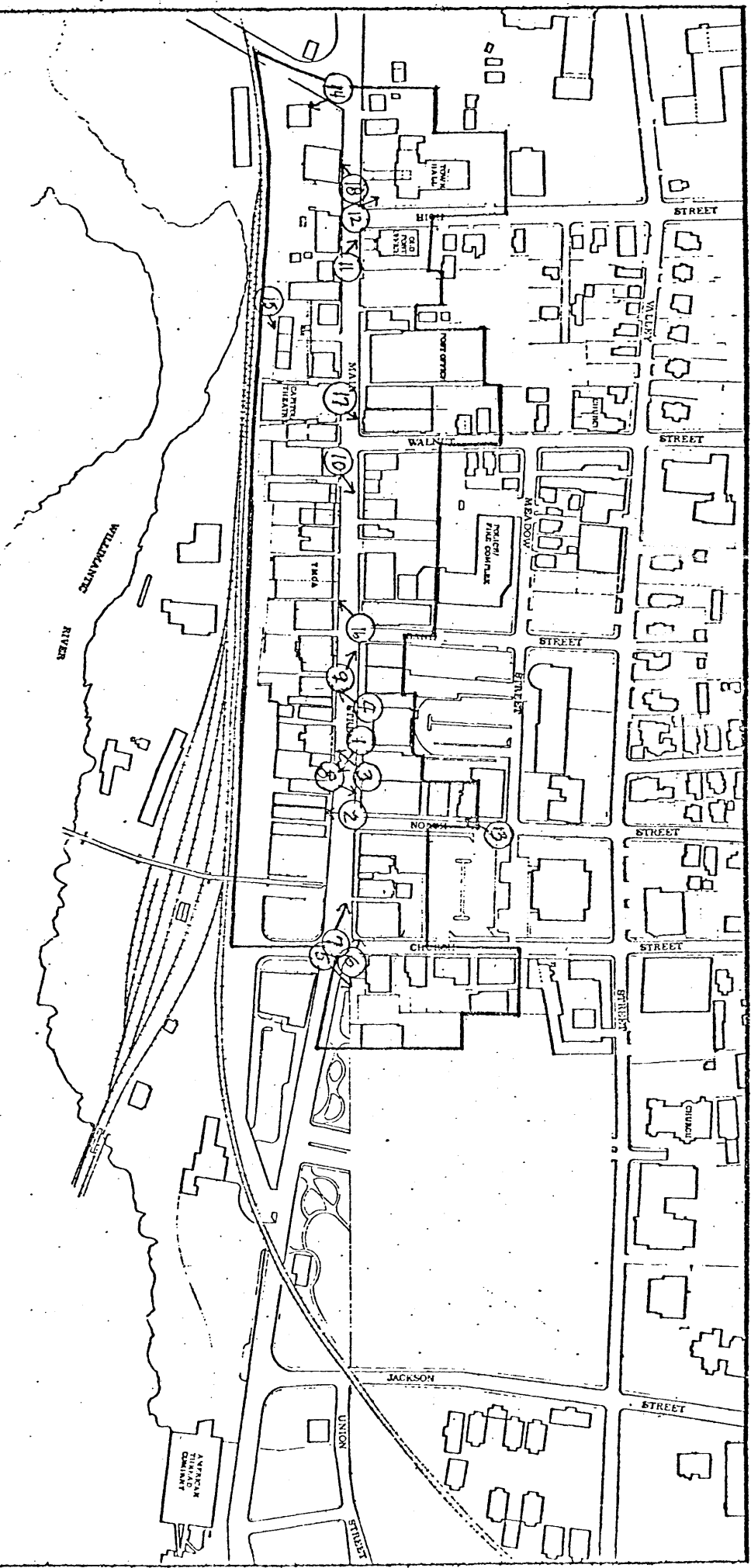
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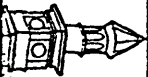
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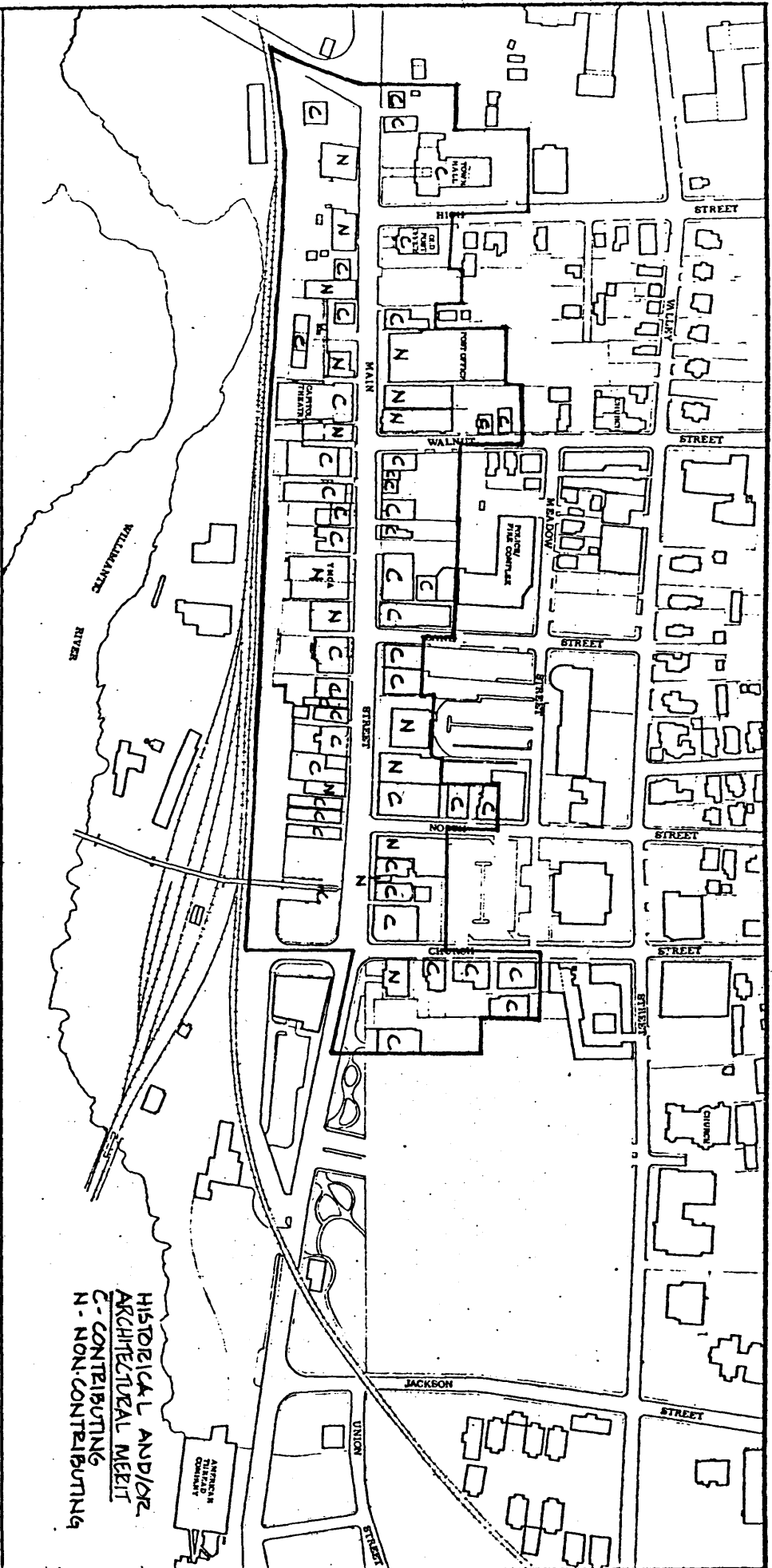
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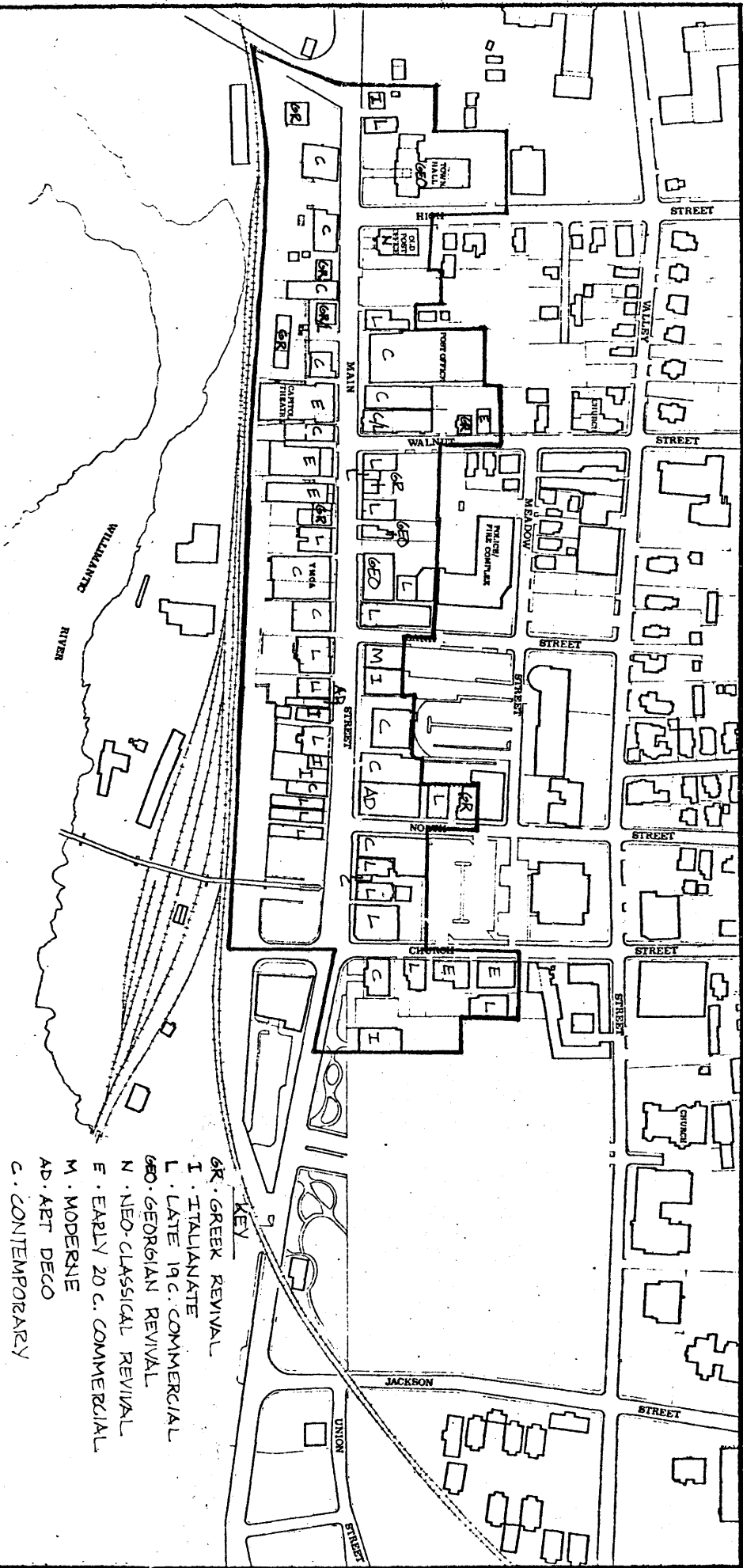
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BUILDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO DISTRICT'S SIGNIFICANCE

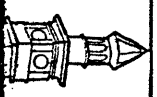
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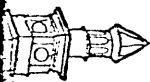


MAIN STREET NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT
 ARCHITECTURAL STYLES
 ANDERSON NOTTER FINEGOLD INC.
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WILLIMANTIC DOWNTOWN STUDY

WILLIMANTIC REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

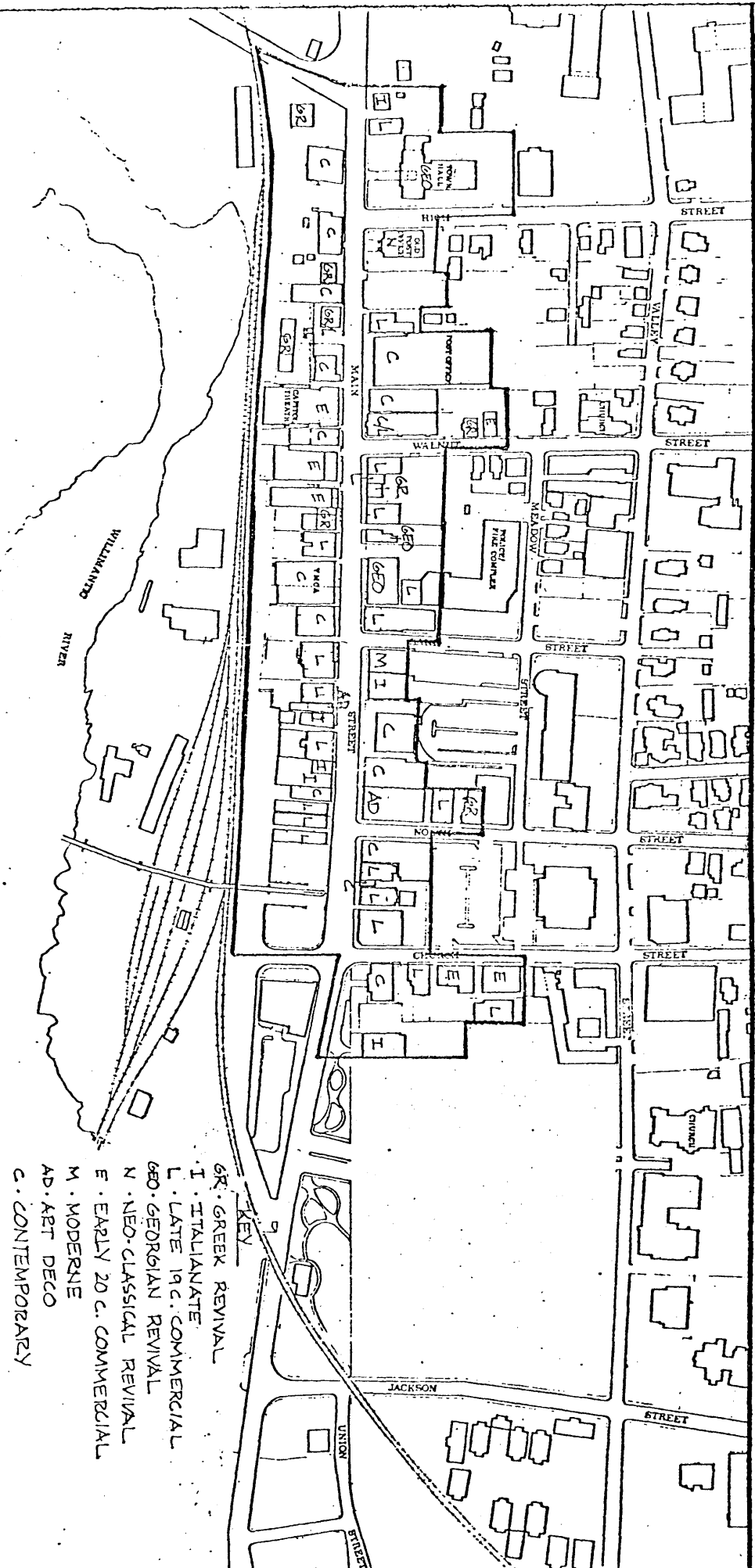
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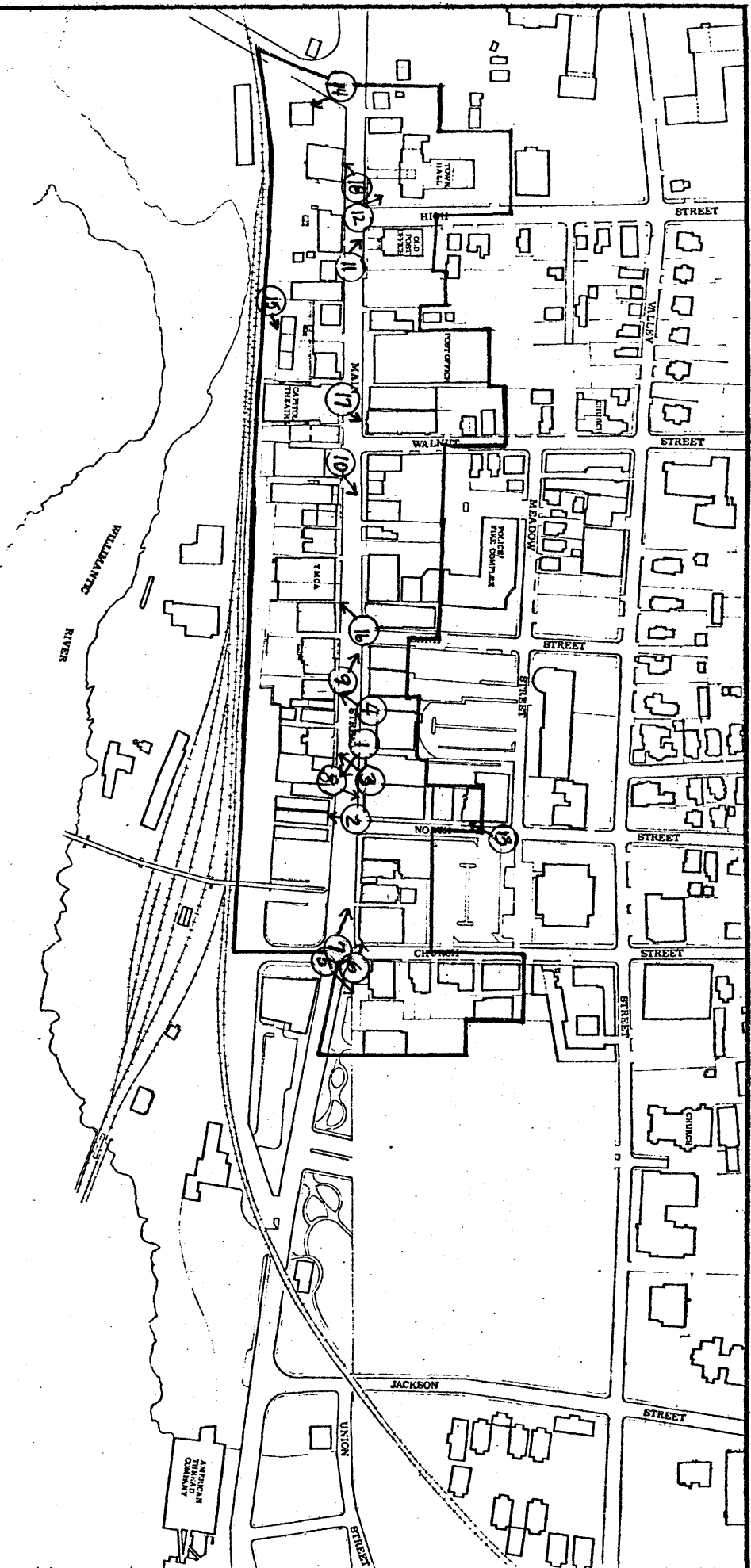


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ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

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- KEY
- GR. GREEK REVIVAL
 - I. ITALIANATE
 - L. LATE 19C. COMMERCIAL
 - GEO. GEORGIAN REVIVAL
 - N. NEO-CLASSICAL REVIVAL
 - E. EARLY 20 C. COMMERCIAL
 - M. MODERNE
 - AD. APT DECO
 - C. CONTEMPORARY

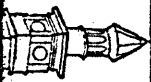




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